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NO 223

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STORM IN THE EAST



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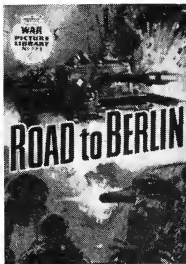
WAR PICTURE LIBRARY

No. 221—H-HOUR

No. 222—ROAD TO BERLIN



The panzers stood waiting to spring the steel jaws of the trap they had laid for the advancing British . . .



They smashed their way towards Nazi Germany, led by a man of burning ambition—on a mission doomed to failure.

ALSO ON SALE NOW :—

No. 220—THE ATLANTIC WALL

Next month's **FOUR** thrilling **WAR PICTURE LIBRARY** issues, on sale 6th January, are :—

No. 224—ADVANCE

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No. 227—DEVIL'S ISLAND

STORM IN THE EAST

BEFORE THE WAR WITH JAPAN STRUCK THE FAR EAST ANOTHER CONFLICT RAGED IN THE CITY OF SINGAPORE — A WAR OF THE TONGS, THE CHINESE SECRET SOCIETIES. IT WAS AN UNDERGROUND INTER-RACIAL STRUGGLE TOUCHING NO-ONE BUT OTHER TONG MEMBERS. UNTIL INSPECTOR GEORGE BARKER EARNED THE NAME OF TONG-BREAKER...



Chapter 1. The Bell Tong

THE TONG SOCIETIES HAD FLOURISHED IN CHINA FOR CENTURIES AND HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS BY THE CHINESE IMMIGRANTS IN THE 19TH CENTURY. THEY WERE TRADE PROTECTION SOCIETIES THAT SOMETIMES PROTECTED THEIR TRADES TOO VIOLENTLY...



VIOLENCE WAS THE LAST RESORT, BUT WAS NEVER SHIRKED - NOT EVEN IN THE STRICTLY POLICED CITY UNDER BRITISH PROTECTION.



THE REPORT OF THE KILLING WAS ON INSPECTOR GEORGE BARKER'S DESK THE NEXT MORNING ...



Storm In The East

THE ENTRANCE TO THE TONG'S HEADQUARTERS WAS INSIGNIFICANT, THE SIGN OF A MINOR TRADE UNION OVER THE DOOR. THE TONGS WERE NOT OSTENTATIOUS.

INSPECTOR!
ARE WE DOING RIGHT?
THE BELL TONG DOES
MUCH GOOD!

MAYBE! BUT IT
ALSO MURDERS - AND
I WON'T STAND THAT IN
MY MANOR! ALL READY?

THE FRONT OFFICE WAS INNOCENT-LOOKING, THE YOUNG CHINESE IN IT AS BLAND AND NON-COMMITTAL AS ONLY AN ORIENTAL CAN BE.

WE ARE HONOURED,
INSPECTOR, BY THIS VISIT.
SOME RICE WINE,
PERHAPS?

YOU CAN CUT OUT
THE SMOOTH STUFF! WHERE'S
THE REST OF 'EM? THEY'VE BEEN
COMING IN ALL NIGHT. I'VE HAD
THE PLACE WATCHED.



THERE WAS NO ANSWER AND BARKER STORMED FORWARD...

I SAID WHERE ARE THE OTHER MEN WHO CAME IN HERE TONIGHT? TALK—OR ELSE—

OR ELSE WHAT? BE CAREFUL, INSPECTOR! WE HAVE FRIENDS IN THIS CITY!



BY THAT TIME, BARKER WAS IN NO MOOD FOR VEILED THREATS...

THERE MUST BE A DOOR OUT OF HERE. FIND IT, SERGEANT!

THERE IS NO NEED TO DO THAT, SIR / SEE—THIS PANEL SLIDES.



THE DOOR LED TO THE INNERMOST SANCTUM OF THE BELL TONG / AS HE PUSHED THROUGH IT, TEN PAIRS OF NARROW EYES STARED AT BARKER...

WHERE IS LOK CHEUNG? I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FOR HIM...



Storm In The East

THE YOUNG MAN AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE ROSE TO HIS FEET. HE WAS TALL FOR A CHINESE AND LACKED THE COLD LOOK OF THE OTHERS. BUT THERE WAS AN ICY TIMBRE TO HIS VOICE.

WHY HAVE YOU FORCED YOUR WAY IN HERE — POLICEMAN?

YOU ARE LOK MING, AREN'T YOU? CHEUNG'S SON! IT'S YOUR FATHER I WANT! WHERE IS HE?



LOK CHEUNG IS NOT HERE. HE IS AT —

SILENCE! THEY HAVE NO RIGHT TO KNOW! BREAKING IN HERE LIKE BARBARIANS!

WE HAVE EVERY RIGHT, LOK MING. WE HAVE A SEARCH WARRANT FOR THESE PREMISES!



THE SEARCH WARRANT GAVE INSPECTOR BARKER THE RIGHT TO TAKE ANY MAN ON SUSPICION — OR ANY DOCUMENTS FOUND IN THE ROOM...

SERGEANT CHANG—
TAKE THOSE PAPERS
ON THE TABLE—

NO! THEY ARE PRIVATE!

CHANG!
TAKE THEM!
USE FORCE IF
NECESSARY!



LOK MING WAS A PROUD YOUNG MAN—AND A HOT-HEADED ONE. HIS AUTHORITY IN THE ROOM WAS BEING FLOUTED. HE WAS LOSING FACE BEFORE HIS OWN COUNTRYMEN—AS CHANG PUSHED HIM BACK, HIS HAND FLASHED TO THE KNIFE AT HIS BELT...

PLEASE—THE
PAPERS...

DEVILS! YOU DIE
FOR THIS!



BARKER CAUGHT THE GLINT OF THE BLADE AND DREW HIS REVOLVER INSTINCTIVELY. THE ECHOES OF THE SHOT CRASHED ROUND THE ROOM.

SERGEANT!
LOOK OUT!



Storm In The East

IT WAS TOO LATE! CHANG FELL FORWARD AND LOK MING SLUMPED TO THE GROUND ALSO, A BULLET IN HIS CHEST...

THE MURDERING FOOL! CORPORAL WANG—SEE TO THEM. YOU! WHERE IS LOK CHEUNG? TALK—QUICKLY!

HE—HE IS AT TUAN WILLIAMS' HOUSE...

INSPECTOR BARKER RAN FOR HIS CAR AND DROVE FAST TO THE EUROPEAN RESIDENTIAL QUARTER OUTSIDE THE CITY—TO THE BUNGALOW OF STEPHEN WILLIAMS.

INSPECTOR BARKER! I TELL TUAN WILLIAMS—

NO—
I'LL GO IN MYSELF.

BARKER KNEW WILLIAMS WELL. A PROSPEROUS CITY MERCHANT, A TAIPAN OF THE FEDERATED MALAY STATES, A MAN OF NO MEAN IMPORTANCE.



HE EXPLAINED HIS MISSION, OMITTING DETAILS OF THE TRAGEDY AT THE TONG HEADQUARTERS.

YOU'RE TONG MAD, BARKER! LOK CHEUNG HAS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR STUPID SECRET SOCIETY MURDERS! AS A MATTER OF FACT, I DINED AT HIS HOUSE LAST NIGHT—SO HE COULDN'T HAVE COMMITTED THE MURDER!

I DIDN'T SAY HE DID, SIR—BUT I KNOW HE HEADS THE BELL TONG—AND THIS WAS A BELL TONG MURDER!



THE CHINESE HAD SAID NOTHING, BUT NOW HE STEPPED FORWARD, THE COURTESY OF HIS RACE SHOWING IN EVERY CREASE OF HIS SMOOTH FACE.

THERE HAS BEEN A MISTAKE—BUT I WILL GO. I AM READY TO ASSIST THE HONOURABLE POLICE.

NO! I WILL NOT HAVE A GUEST ARRESTED IN MY HOUSE. I WILL TELEPHONE THE COMMISSIONER—

BUT BARKER STAYED HIM WITH HIS NEXT WORDS...

THERE IS NO NEED! THE COMMISSIONER WILL ALREADY KNOW THAT A POLICE-SERGEANT WAS KILLED TONIGHT—BY *HIS* SON!

MY SON? HE HAS KILLED A POLICEMAN? WHERE IS HE NOW? WHERE IS MING?

FOR A SECOND, SILENCE HUNG IN THE AIR...

LOK MING IS ALSO DEAD! I SHOT HIM AS HE KNIFED THE SERGEANT.

YOU DID WHAT? GOOD GRIEF, MAN—

DEAD! MY SON IS DEAD!



FOR A HEAVY MAN, LOK CHEUNG MOVED ASTONISHINGLY QUICKLY. HE WAS OUT OF THE REAR DOOR BEFORE BARKER COULD GET PAST WILLIAMS...



THE MALAY QUICKLY TURNED THE KEY AND HURLED IT ACROSS THE ROOM. AS BARKER HEARD THE ENGINE OF HIS CAR ROAR, HE LEAPT FOR AN OPEN WINDOW.



Storm In The East

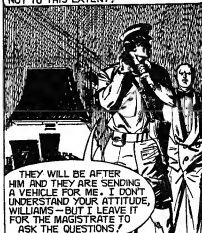
HE AIMED FOR THE TYRES, BUT THE CAR WAS ON THE MAIN ROAD BEFORE HE COULD FIRE AGAIN. STEPHEN WILLIAMS SPOKE IN COLD FURY.

BY HEAVENS, BARKER, I'LL HAVE YOUR HIDE FOR THIS! YOU ARE EXCEEDING YOUR DUTY!

GET OUT OF MY WAY, WILLIAMS! I MUST TELEPHONE H. Q. YOU, TOO, WILL HAVE TO ANSWER FOR OBSTRUCTION!



HE HAD KNOWN LOK CHEUNG, PROMINENT TIN-MINE OWNER, WAS FRIENDLY WITH STEPHEN WILLIAMS — BUT NOT TO THIS EXTENT!



THEY WILL BE AFTER HIM AND THEY ARE SENDING A VEHICLE FOR ME. I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR ATTITUDE, WILLIAMS — BUT I LEAVE IT FOR THE MAGISTRATE TO ASK THE QUESTIONS!

LOK CHEUNG IS INNOCENT OF ANY CHARGES YOU CAN BRING. IF YOU GOADED HIS SON INTO AN INDISCRETION AS AN EXCUSE TO KILL HIM — I'LL BRING TO BEAR ALL THE INFLUENCE I CAN TO MAKE YOU STAND TRIAL! NOW — GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!



Chapter 2. *The Defeat*

AT DAWN THE NEXT MORNING, THE JAPANESE STRUCK AT PEARL HARBOUR AND THE GREAT PORT OF SINGAPORE SOON HEARD THE DRONE OF ENEMY AIRCRAFT AND THE SICKENING CRUMP OF EXPLODING BOMBS.



Storm In The East

AT ONCE THE NORMAL LIFE OF THE CITY CAME TO A DRAMATIC STOP. CRIMES, EVEN MURDER, WERE FORGOTTEN AS THE COMMUNITY GIRDED ITSELF FOR WAR. THE "SINGAPORE VOLUNTEER DEFENCE FORCE" WAS IMMEDIATELY EMBODIED INTO THE REGULAR ARMY.

FALL IN, 'B' COMPANY!
AT THE DOUBLE! WE'VE GOT
TO SHOW THE REGULARS
WE'RE AS GOOD AS
THEY ARE!



MEN OF ALL RACES, FROM ALL WALKS OF CIVILIAN LIFE, WERE IN THE VOLUNTEER DEFENCE FORCE. INSPECTOR GEORGE BARKER OF THE SINGAPORE POLICE, BECAME SERGEANT BARKER OF 'B' COMPANY.

COMPANY
ALL PRESENT
AND CORRECT,
SIR!

THANK YOU, SERGEANT. WE
REPORT TO FORT CANNING AT ONCE.
USE WHATEVER TRANSPORT THERE IS—
PRIVATE CARS, RICKSHAWS—THE LOT!



AT FORT CANNING, THE SINGAPORE DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS, SERGEANT BARKER RECEIVED FURTHER ORDERS.

YOUR PLATOON IS BEING DETACHED TO REINFORCE 'A' COMPANY, WHICH IS BEING SENT FORWARD INTO NORTH JOHORE. THE PLATOON COMMANDER, MISTER FENNER, IS BEING KEPT BACK HERE AS A STAFF OFFICER, SO YOU WILL TAKE THE PLATOON TO REPORT TO THE SPECIAL TRAIN AT SINGAPORE STATION.

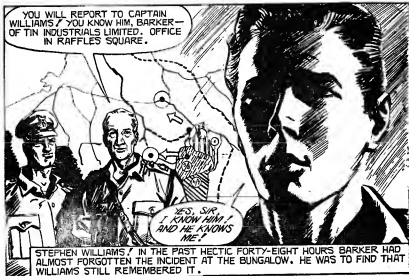
VERY GOOD, SIR.



YOU WILL REPORT TO CAPTAIN WILLIAMS. YOU KNOW HIM, BARKER—OF TIN INDUSTRIALS LIMITED. OFFICE IN RAFFLES SQUARE.

YES, SIR, I KNOW HIM! AND HE KNOWS ME!

STEPHEN WILLIAMS. IN THE PAST HECTIC FORTY-EIGHT HOURS BARKER HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN THE INCIDENT AT THE BUNGALOW. HE WAS TO FIND THAT WILLIAMS STILL REMEMBERED IT.



CAPTAIN WILLIAMS WAS ALREADY BRINGING HIS CIVILIAN ORGANISING ABILITY TO BEAR ON THE MILITARY PROBLEM AT THE RAILWAY STATION WHEN BARKER FOUND HIM.



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVILIAN AND POLICEMAN HAD GONE, NOW IT WAS OFFICER AND N.C.O.

AH! EX-INSPECTOR BARKER, THE MAN WITH THE PERSECUTION COMPLEX! FORTUNATELY FOR YOU, ALL KILLING FROM NOW ON IS LEGALISED — SO LONG AS IT'S JAPANESE YOU SHOOT DOWN!

AS YOU SAY, SIR! CAN I GET MY PLATOON ON BOARD NOW?



AS THE LONG TRAIN SPED
ACROSS THE CAUSEWAY
SEPARATING THE ISLAND OF
SINGAPORE FROM THE
MAINLAND, THE JAPANESE
FORCES WHICH HAD LANDED
IN THE NORTH, WERE
ALREADY BATTERING THEIR
WAY SOUTH...

BANZAI! ATTACK!
ATTACK!



"A" COMPANY BEGAN TO DIG OUT A DEFENSIVE LINE IN THE RUBBER PLANTATIONS OF JOHORE STATE. ON THE SECOND EVENING, BARKER FOUND THAT HE WAS IN DANGER NOT ONLY FROM THE JAPANESE...



LIQUID RUBBER DRIBBLED FROM THE WOUND THE KNIFE HAD MADE IN THE TREE. SERGEANT BARKER SPUN ROUND...



IT WAS THAT TIME OF DAY KNOWN IN THE ARMY AS "LAST LIGHT", AND IN THE EAST THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DAY AND NIGHT IS A FLEETING DUSK. BARKER GOT ONE SHOT IN AT THE RUNNING FIGURE.

MISSED HIM!
SOON I WON'T BE
ABLE TO SEE HIM
AT ALL!



BY THE TIME BARKER REACHED THE FRINGE OF THE ESTATE, THE QUARRY HAD DISAPPEARED INTO THE SKIRTING JUNGLE. HE SAW WHERE HIS ASSAILANT HAD GONE THROUGH THE WIRE FENCE AND HIS FOOT TROD ON SOMETHING HARD.

I'D BE A
FOOL TO FOLLOW HIM
INTO THERE! HELLO!
WHAT'S THIS?



WHEN HE REPORTED THE INCIDENT TO CAPTAIN WILLIAMS, THE EX-TAIPAN LOOKED AT HIM WITH AN ILL-CONCEALED SNEER.

SOMEBODY TRIED TO KILL YOU,
EH? IT'S AN OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE,
BARKER—OR ARE YOU SURE YOU
DIDN'T DREAM IT?

I DIDN'T
DREAM *THIS*,
SIR!





BARKER'S WORDS ECHOED THE OPTIMISTIC FEELING AMONG THE TROOPS. BUT BY THE TIME THE ENEMY HAD REACHED JOHORE, THAT OPTIMISM WAS WEARING THIN...



ON THE SINGAPORE SIDE OF THE JOHORE CAUSEWAY, THE FORCE REGROUPED. ACROSS THE DIVIDING STRIP MARCHED THE REMNANTS OF A FAMOUS SCOTTISH REGIMENT, WHICH HAD FOUGHT THE LONG DELAYING ACTION DOWN THE LENGTH OF MALAYA.



BRINGING UP THE REAR, THE LAST MAN BETWEEN THE DEFENDERS AND THE ADVANCING JAPS, CAME JOCK McTAGGART—PIPE-MAJOR...



THE LONG MILES OF PIPE-BLOWING HAD CAUSED HIM TO GET WELL BEHIND. WHEN THE SAPPERS, WITH AN ESCORT OF S.V.D.F., CAME TO BLOW THE BREACH, McTAGGART WAS STILL LOST IN THE MISTS ARISING FROM THE MANGROVE SWAMPS.



AS THE TRUCK ROARED INTO LIFE, BARKER COCKED AN EAR. FROM OUT OF THE MIST CAME A WEIRD, WAILING NOISE...

HOLD IT, SIR!
CAN'T YOU HEAR
SOMETHING? LIKE
A BANSHEE,
IT IS!

PROBABLY
THE JAPS SINGING
'ROLL OUT THE
BARREL'! COME ON-
TIME'S RUNNING
OUT!



THE SERGEANT SAW THE BIG PIPE-MAJOR. THE SOUND WAS CLEARER NOW—THE PLAINTIVE NOTES OF THE "FLOWERS OF THE FOREST!"

THERE 'S
SOMEBODY COMING!
ONE OF THE SCOTTISH
LADS!



THE TRUCK WAS MOVING BUT THE EX-POLICEMAN TOOK A FLYING LEAP FROM THE BACK FOR THE PIPER WAS MARCHING TOO SLOW—SLOWER THAN THE TIME-FUSE WAS BURNING!

SERGEANT! THE
CHARGES ARE READY
TO EXPLODE!

I KNOW!
TELL 'EM TO
KEEP THE TRUCK
MOVING!



Storm In The East

SERGEANT BARKER RACED BACK ALONG THE CAUSEWAY, BUT IN THE FINEST TRADITION OF THE PIPE-PLAYING REGIMENTS, PIPE-MAJOR McTAGGART REFUSED TO BE HURRIED.

CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND, MAN! THE WHOLE ROAD IS GOING SKY-HIGH ANY SECOND!

DON'T RUSH ME, MON! YON WEE JAPS ARE WAY BACK!

THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING BARKER COULD DO...

HEY! YE SASSENACH THIEF! I'LL TWIST YOU IN A KNOT WHEN I LAY ME HANDS ON YOU!

HE WAS STILL LEADING WHEN THE TIME-FUSE RAN OUT. WITH A TERRIFIC ROAR, A WHOLE SECTION OF THE CAUSEWAY ERUPTED INTO THE AIR.

DOWN!
COVER YOUR
HEAD!



IT WAS A STRANGE VIOLENT WAY TO FORM A FRIENDSHIP, BUT BARKER WAS TO THANK THE DAY HE STOLE A SET OF BAGPIPES, FOR McTAGGART WAS A MAN WHO NEVER FORGOT A FAVOUR — OR A GRUDGE.

ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?



AYE! I'M INDEBTED TO
YE — BUT YOU TOOK AN AWFUL
CHANCE — SNEAKING ME
PIPES AN' ALL!

Storm In The East

ON 15th FEBRUARY 1942 SINGAPORE SURRENDERED. POUNDED BY HEAVY GUNS, BOMBED FROM THE AIR, ALMOST WITHOUT WATER OR FOOD, AND WITH A LARGE CIVILIAN POPULATION TO PROTECT, THE CITY COULD HOLD OUT NO LONGER. NEARLY 50,000 PRISONERS WERE MARCHED BY THE JAPANESE TO THE BARRACKS AT CHANGI AT THE TIP OF THE ISLAND.



HERDED TOGETHER IN THE BARRACKS, THE P.O.W.'s WAITED FOR THE NEXT MOVE. THOUSANDS WOULD BE SENT TO SLAVE ON THE INFAMOUS BURMA-SIAM RAILWAY, THOUSANDS WOULD BE SHIPPED OUT TO WORK IN JAPAN.



HUNDREDS OF OTHER MEN WERE THINKING OF ESCAPE AND ALSO FINDING THE DIFFICULTIES SEEMINGLY INSURMOUNTABLE. BUT CAPTAIN WILLIAMS WAS LUCKIER. HE HAD CONTACTS...

TONIGHT, THEN, TUN! YOU WILL NOT FORGET LOK CHEUNG'S INSTRUCTIONS P

I UNDERSTAND. TELL LOK CHEUNG I AM GRATEFUL —

SILENCE THERE — NO TALKING!



LONG AFTER DARKNESS HAD FALLEN THAT NIGHT, BARKER WAS JERKED OUT OF SLEEP BY A HAND ACROSS HIS MOUTH...

QUIET! IT'S ME, WILLIAMS! SPEAK SOFTLY, BARKER.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS? WHAT'S WRONG?





WILLIAMS NOTED THE DETERMINATION IN THE OTHER'S VOICE - AND AGREED. JOCK McTAGGART EAGERLY FOLLOWED THE OTHER TWO AS THEY CREPT QUIETLY TOWARDS THE CAMP PERIMETER, WHERE THE MANGROVE SWAMPS WERE A MORE FORMIDABLE BARRIER THAN PRISON WIRE...



CAPTAIN WILLIAMS LED THE WAY TO THE PRE-ARRANGED RENDEZVOUS, WHERE THE EXPOSED ROOTS OF THE MANGROVE TWISTED INTO STRANGE SHAPES. FROM THE SWAMP CAME EERIE NIGHT SOUNDS — THE CROAK OF THE BULLFROGS, THE WHIRRING SCREECH OF THE CICADAS.

THIS IS IT,
BY THE BANYAN
TREE!



THE THREE CHINESE WHO EMERGED FROM THE SWAMP WERE WIRY AND TOUGH LOOKING.

WHO IS
THE THIRD MAN?
LOK CHEUNG SPOKE
ONLY OF TWO...

LOOK —
I DON'T KNOW WHO
YOU ARE, BUT WE
GO TOGETHER, OR
NOT AT ALL!



THE CHINESE WHO HAD SPOKEN THRUST HIS FACE CLOSE UP TO BARKER'S...

YOU DO NOT KNOW ME, INSPECTOR BARKER? AH SONG IS MY NAME! I WAS THERE WHEN YOU KILLED LOK MING!

THE BELL TONG! I GUESSED AS MUCH! SO THE TONG IS AFTER REVENGE, EH?



THE TONG DOES NOT SEEK REVENGE—BUT LOK CHEUNG DEMANDS JUSTICE. COME WITH US AND DEFEND YOURSELF—OR STAY HERE AND ROT! IF YOU DECIDE TO COME—YOUR FRIEND CAN COME, ALSO.



BARKER WAS POISED ON A RAZOR'S EDGE OF INDECISION. IT WAS JOCK McTAGGART WHO SWUNG THE BALANCE.

I DINNA KEN WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT, BUT I'LL ABIDE BY WHAT YE SAY, GEORDIE, LAD!

ALL RIGHT, WE'LL GO! I'LL TAKE MY CHANCE, AH SONG!



ONLY A NATIVE-BORN COULD HAVE KNOWN OF THE SHALLOW, SWAMP-COVERED TRACK THROUGH THE MANGROVES.



YOU KNEW ABOUT THE BELL TONG, WILLIAMS— AND YOU KNEW LOK CHEUNG WAS ITS LEADER.

I HAVE BEEN OUT EAST LONGER THAN YOU, BARKER. I DON'T SEE EVERYTHING THROUGH A POLICEMAN'S EYES! I SAY YOU MISJUDGED THE TONGS!

A LONG LOW FISHING BOAT WAS HIDDEN IN THE SHADOWS OF SOME MONSTROUS TREE ROOTS WHERE THE SWAMP MET THE SEA...



THERE WILL BE LITTLE ROOM BECAUSE OF THIS EXTRA MAN—

DON'T FRET YOURSELF, LADDIE! I CAN SQUASH INTO NOTHING!

WARILY, THE CHINESE EASED THE BOAT OUT INTO THE STRAITS OF JOHORE. BARKER'S MIND WAS WORKING FAST.

THERE'S ONLY THREE OF THEM! JOCK AND I SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET THE BETTER OF THEM - IF WE CAN GRAB THE STENS...

BUT THROUGHOUT THAT SHORT VOYAGE, THE CHINESE KEPT A CAREFUL WATCH OVER THEIR CHARGES...

WE LAND NEAR JOHORE SAPIT. THERE MUST BE NO SOUND, FOR THE JAPANESE DOGS ARE IN THE KAMPONG.

THEY LANDED SAFELY AND CAREFULLY CONCEALED THE SAMPAN. UNOBSERVED, THEY MOVED INLAND WITHOUT INCIDENT. BUT AS THEY SKIRTED THE KAMPONG OF JOHORE SAPIT...

FIRE!

TWO JAPANESE SOLDIERS HAD BEEN FOUND DEAD THAT DAY AND MAJOR KOMITUSA WAS TEACHING THE VILLAGERS A BITTER LESSON.

BRING THE OTHERS!
I WILL SHOW THESE DOGS
WHAT IT MEANS TO SABOTAGE
THE IMPERIAL ARMY!



THEY COULD HAVE MOVED ON
UNDETECTED, BUT AH SONG HAD
OTHER IDEAS.

THE MEN THEY SHOOT
WOULD MAKE RECRUITS
FOR THE GUERRILLA
JUNGLE ARMY! LET
US ATTACK THESE
ENEMY!

ATTACK?P
WHAT WITH?
OUR BARE
HANDS?



AH SONG'S FAMILY HAD BEEN WIPED
OUT BY THE INVADERS. THERE WAS A
DEBT TO BE PAID.

I HAVE GRENADES. TAKE
THEM, ENGLISHMEN, AND WE
WILL ATTACK TOGETHER.

I'M NO
SASSENACH-BUT GIVE
ME A 'PINEAPPLE'
AND I'M WITH
YE, BOY!



Storm In The East

THE GRENADES, HURLED BY A STRONG SCOT'S ARM AND SINEWY ENGLISH MUSCLES, EXPLODED AT THE FEET OF THE FIRING PARTY.



BEFORE THE STARTLED JAPANESE COULD RECOVER, THE THREE CHINESE WERE RACING ACROSS THE CLEARING, WITH THEIR STENS BLAZING...



IN ONE VIOLENT MINUTE, ALL THE JAPS, SAVE ONE, WERE WIPED OUT — BUT THAT ONE WAS THE OFFICER, MAJOR KOMITUSA...

SERGEANT MOKI!
FOOL! WHERE IS THE
REST OF THE BLEARY-
EYED PLATOON.
GET THEM!

AGH—
AT ONCE,
MAJOR SAN!



THE BEWILDERED VILLAGERS HAD STOOD LIKE SHEEP UNTIL AH SONG RAGED AMONG THEM.

RUN! GO NORTH! GO
TO THE BELL TIN-MINE AT
SEPEI PANGIT!

DO YOU KNOW
HOW TO USE THESE
THINGS, JOCK?

A GUN'S A GUN,
MON! POINT IT THE
RIGHT WAY AN' SQUEEZE
THE TRIGGER!



Storm In The East

AS THEY DIVED BACK INTO THE COVER OF THE TREES, BARKER FELT MORE AT EASE WITH THE COMFORTING WEIGHT OF A RIFLE IN HIS HANDS.



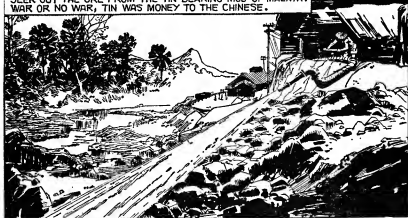
BUT AS THEY TURNED OFF THE PATH AN ORDER SNAPPED OUT, FROM THE MAN THEY HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN - WILLIAMS.





Chapter 3. *The Trial*

AT DAWN, THE TIN WORKERS AT SEPEI PANGIT STARTED TO SEEK OUT THE ORE FROM THE TIN-BEARING MUD OF MALAYA. WAR OR NO WAR, TIN WAS MONEY TO THE CHINESE.



NOT EVERY TIN-MINE HAD A TEMPLE, BUT MANY DID, FOR THE ORIGINAL MINERS CAME FROM CHINA. CERTAINLY, NONE HAD ONE SO RICH, SO RESPLENDENT, AS THE TEMPLE AT THE BELL TIN MINE.

TAIPAN! I HAVE BROUGHT THE POLICEMAN, BARKER. THE OTHER, THE RED-HEADED ONE, IS A FRIEND OF BARKERS. WE HAD TO BRING HIM, TOO.

AND TUAN WILLIAMS! WELCOME, MY OLD FRIEND. COME, SIT BY ME!



SERGEANT BARKER'S 'TRIAL' BEGAN AT ONCE. AS HE SAT SECURELY STRAPPED IN A CHAIR IN FRONT OF THE GREAT BELL AND LISTENED TO THE WITNESSES, HE KNEW HE HAD NO CHANCE...

PAH MOK!
YOU WERE PRESENT
AT THE DEATH OF MY
SON! TELL WHAT
YOU SAW.

HONOURABLE ONE,
THAT NIGHT THE POLICEMEN,
LED BY THIS ONE, BROKE
INTO THE TONG HOUSE
IN SINGAPORE —



TO BARKER, THE POLICEMAN, IT WAS A HIDEOUS FARCE. NOT A WORD WAS SPOKEN ABOUT THE KILLING OF SERGEANT CHANG.

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PROVE, LOK CHEUNG? YOUR SON WAS KILLED IN THE ACT OF MURDERING A POLICE SERGEANT. THE LAW WOULD HAVE HANGED HIM.



THE LAW OF THE TONG! THE LAW WHICH HAD HELD SWAY IN CHINA, IN THE DAYS WHEN THERE WAS NO OTHER LAW...



THE LONG KNIFE LOK CHEUNG DREW FROM HIS SLEEVE WAS AS SHARP AS A RAZOR.



NOTHING COULD HAVE SAVED BARKER EXCEPT A MIRACLE...



MAJOR KOMITUSA HAD WASTED NO TIME...



AT THE FIRST WARNING THERE HAD BEEN AN IMMEDIATE RUSH FROM THE TEMPLE—LEAVING ONLY THREE MEN WITHIN ...

YOU / DROP THAT KNIFE / OR, BY JAMIE, I'LL CROWN YE WITH THIS CHAIR /

WATCH HIM, JOCK / I RECKON HE'S MAD /



THEN, THE OLD CHINESE TURNED, THE KNIFE HELD LOOSELY IN HIS OUTSTRETCHED HAND ...

VERY WELL / THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR VENGEANCE / TAKE THE KNIFE, REDHEADED ONE, AND GUARD THE DOOR, I WILL RELEASE THE POLICEMAN /



MCTAGGART REACHED THE DOOR OF THE TEMPLE TO FIND AH SONG AND HIS TWO COMPANIONS ALREADY IN ACTION.



THE LAST STRAP HOLDING SERGEANT BARKER CAME LOOSE IN LOK CHEUNG'S HAND.



Storm In The East

THE JAPANESE WERE NEARER NOW AND AH SONG AND HIS COMPANIONS TURNED FOR THE SAFETY OF THE TEMPLE . . .

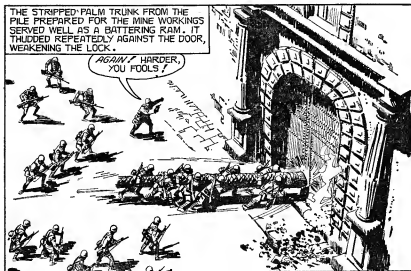


BUT THE JAPANESE GRENADES MADE LITTLE IMPRESSION ON THE SOLID DOORS OF THE BELL TEMPLE. THEY SHUDDERED UNDER THE SHOCK AND THE WOOD SCARRED UNDER THE FLYING METAL. BUT THEY HELD.



THE STRIPPED PALM TRUNK FROM THE PILE PREPARED FOR THE MINE WORKINGS SERVED WELL AS A BATTERING RAM. IT THUDDED REPEATEDLY AGAINST THE DOOR, WEAKENING THE LOCK.

AGAIN! HARDER, YOU FOOLS!



WITH TIME RUNNING OUT, BARKER, WHO HAD TAKEN COMMAND, RISKED A BOLD MOVE.



IT WAS ONE OF THE OLDEST TRICKS IN THE WORLD—BUT IT WORKED! THE MOMENTUM OF THE RAM CARRIED ITS BEARERS FLYING HEADLONG INTO THE TEMPLE...



THEN THE DEFENDERS BURST THROUGH THE TEMPLE DOOR INTO THE SUN-DRENCHED SQUARE, BLAZING A PATH THROUGH THE JAPANESE.



AT THE FIRST WARNING OF ATTACK, STEPHEN WILLIAMS AND THE MEMBERS OF THE TONG HAD GAINED THE SHELTER OF THE MINE-OFFICE. WILLIAMS WAS STAGGERED AS THE CHINESE BEGAN TO RIP UP THE FLOOR...



Storm In The East

MEANWHILE, SERGEANT BARKER'S PARTY HAD BATTLED THEIR WAY TOWARDS THE ROCKY OUTCROP THAT MARKED THE ENTRANCE TO THE TIN MINE...



THEY SLIPPED DOWN BEHIND THE ROCKS. BESIDE THEM, THE FIERCE WATER JET STILL GOUGED INTO THE TIN-BEARING EARTH...



WITH THE FEW ROUNDS REMAINING, THEY HELD OFF THE ATTACKING JAPANESE, BUT THEIR FIRE FALTERED AND FINALLY PETERED OUT.

HANG IT!
WHAT A WAY
TO FINISH!
THEY CAN
PICK US OFF
LIKE SITTING
BIRDS!

NO, WAIT!
THERE'S ONE
WEAPON
LEFT!

WITH THE CESSATION OF FIRE, THE JAPANESE FIXED BAYONETS AND HURLED THEMSELVES AT THE EDGE OF THE MINE.

BANZAI!
BANZAI!

THE GIANT WATER PIPE WAS CLAMPED TO THE BOARD, BUT McTAGGART, USING ALL HIS MASSIVE STRENGTH, WRENCHED IT FREE...

KEEP OUT
OF MY WAY, MON!
I DON'T KNOW HOW
LONG I CAN
HOLD IT!

THE CHARGING JAPANESE WERE NEARLY ON THEM AS JOCK McTAGGART HEAVED THE POWERFUL WATER-JET INTO POSITION. THE ENEMY HARDLY KNEW WHAT HIT THEM.



SERGEANT BARKER LED THE DASH TO THE EDGE OF THE MINE AREA. WILLIAMS AND THE TONG MEMBERS HAD BROKEN OUT OF THE OFFICE. THE OLD CHINESE WERE HANDLING THE MODERN WEAPONS LIKE VETERANS...



THEY FOUND THE SAFETY AND CONCEALMENT OF THE TREES. BARKER TURNED TO WILLIAMS...

LOK CHEUNG STAYED IN THE TEMPLE. HE WILL HAVE HAD IT BY NOW. AS I NEARLY HAD IT — BECAUSE OF YOU, WILLIAMS / WHAT'S YOUR PART IN ALL THIS?



I'VE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE BELL TONG FOR TEN YEARS! IT'S RARE FOR A NON-CHINESE — BUT I NEEDED THE TONG FOR MY BUSINESS. WITH THE TONG ON YOUR SIDE, YOU YOU DON'T GET LABOUR WORRIES. SOMETIMES, THEY HAVE TO PLAY IT HARD — BUT THEY MAKE THINGS WORK!



DESPITE HIS BITTERNESS, BARKER LISTENED. INWARDLY, HE HAD TO ADMIT THAT, DESPITE THEIR SHORTCOMINGS, THE TONGS DID MUCH GOOD FOR THEIR MEMBERS.

FOR MY PART, I HAD TO TAKE TONG ORDERS. IN THIS CASE, IT WAS TO GET YOU TO TRIAL. I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT, BARKER —

WILL YE STOP BLATHERING AND LOOK AT YON CHINESE...



THE THREE WHITE MEN STARED AFTER THE CHINESE WONDERINGLY...

WE GO BACK FOR LOK CHEUNG! WE DO NOT LEAVE EVEN THE DEAD BODY OF THE HONOURABLE ONE TO THE ENEMY!

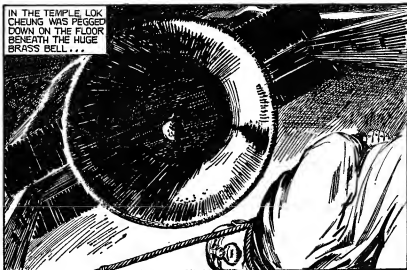
WILLIAMS SPOKE FIRST...

I MUST GO BACK, TOO! I HAVE A DUTY...

YOU KNOW, HE MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE - THERE MIGHT STILL BE A CHANCE!

AYE, IT'S NOT LIKELY - BUT I'LL HAVE A SHINDY WITH THE NIPS AT ANY TIME!

IN THE TEMPLE, LOK CHEUNG WAS PEGGED DOWN ON THE FLOOR BENEATH THE HUGE BRASS BELL...



STANDING OVER THE OLD CHINESE WAS MAJOR KOMITUSA, HIS FACE TWISTED WITH FURY...

TALK, OLD MAN / YOUR LIFE IS RUNNING OUT / WHO SUPPLIES THE GUERRILLAS WITH MEN AND ARMS ? WHERE HAVE THE WHITE MEN GONE ?



LOK CHEUNG MADE NO ANSWER AND KOMITUSA WAS A MAN OF LITTLE PATIENCE.

VERY WELL ! THE STUPID OLD ONE WANTS TO DIE ! TAKE THE SWORD AND CUT THE ROPE !



THE SERGEANT SWARMED UP THE BELL STRAND AND STRADDLED THE TOPMOST BEAM...

READY, MAJOR SAN !

OLD MAN ! I GIVE YOU ONE LAST CHANCE ! TALK - OR DIE BY THE BELL !

BE QUICK, JAPANESE DOG ! MY ANCESTORS WAIT !



Storm In The East

BUT EVEN AS THE SWORD BEGAN TO SAW ON THE ROPE, A STEN CLATTERED IN THE TEMPLE, THE FIRST BULLETS SMASHING INTO THE EXECUTIONER ...



THE SURPRISE WAS COMPLETE. THE JAP'S WERE CUT DOWN WHERE THEY STOOD. AS BARKER AND WILLIAMS STRUGGLED WITH LOK'CHEUNG'S BONDS, McTAGGART ACTED, SWARMING UP THE BELL SUPPORT WITH ASTONISHING AGILITY.



HE TOOK THE ROPE IN HIS HUGE HANDS AS THE LAST STRANDS FRAYED AND BROKE. HIS POWERFUL MUSCLES KNOTTED AS HE TOOK THE STRAIN OF THE ENORMOUS WEIGHT.

BY THE GREAT HORNED TOAD!
I CANNA HOLD THIS THING LONG!

BUT THERE WAS A LIMIT TO MCTAGGART'S GREAT STRENGTH. THE ROPE DRAGGED THROUGH HIS HANDS, BUT EVEN AS THE BELL CRASHED, LOK CHEUNG WAS DRAGGED TO SAFETY...

GOT HIM!
WELL DONE,
JOCK!

IS THE OLD
MAN ALL RIGHT,
THEN?

YES, HE'S
ALL RIGHT,
THANKS TO
YOU.



THERE WOULD BE NO FUTURE IN THE BELL TIN MINE NOW. THEY GAVE LOK CHEUNG TIME TO RECOVER AND THEN PREPARED TO TREK UP INTO THE HILLS, WHERE THE GUERRILLA ARMY, THAT WAS TO GROW IN STRENGTH AND PURPOSE, HAD ITS FIGHTING BASE.

YOU ARE A BRAVE MAN, BARKER. AND I HAVE BEEN A BLIND OLD FATHER. I KNOW NOW MY SON DESERVED TO DIE.

THANK YOU, LOK CHEUNG! I SEE NOW THERE WAS BLINDNESS ON BOTH SIDES!



ONE MAN THERE CARED NOTHING FOR TONGS OR TONG-BREAKING. FOR HIM THERE WAS ONLY ONE ENEMY—THE JAPANESE. AND FOR THE OTHERS, ALSO—UNTIL THEIR PURPOSE HAD BEEN FULFILLED, THERE WOULD BE ONLY THE ONE ENEMY, ALSO.

YE'RE ALL BLATHERING AGAIN! IT'S AN AWFUL WASTE O' TIME! WHEN THERE'S NIPS TO BE ELIMINATED!

NO MORE BLATHERING THEN, JOCK! IF IT'S ACTION YOU'RE AFTER, IT'S ACTION YOU'LL GET...



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